

THE CASE OF PROF. FOSTER.

Prof. Foster is an ordained minister of the Baptist Church and an instructor in the Chicago University. He has long been known as denying the fundamental truths of the Christian faith. Charges were recently brought by certain ministers before the Baptist Ministers' Conference of Chicago against Prof. Foster as a member of the Conference, and upon the basis of these charges, it was asked that the professor be expelled. Some of the reasons assigned why this action should be taken were as follows:

That he was the author of "The Functions of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence," which, they alleged, showed its writer to be an atheist.

That he was the author of "The Finality of the Christian Religion," which, they declared, branded its writer as an infidel.

That he admitted he was a Unitarian and acted as pastor of a Unitarian church.

That he repudiated the authority of the Scripture, which the Baptists hold to be supreme and final as a court of authority.

That while Baptists believed in the Deity of Christ, he denied it.

That he made light of the doctrines which the Baptists held to be true while he drew \$3,500 a year salary from a Baptist treasury.

This resolution was finally adopted by the conference.

"Whereas, the recent utterances reported to have been made by Prof. Foster concerning the fundamentalities of our faith, whether correctly or incorrectly reported and whether understood or misunderstood, have left an impression upon the general public which tends to put the Baptist denomination in a false light; therefore—

"Resolved, That we, as members of the Baptist conference, believing in the historic Baptist position of liberty of thought and utterance, reaffirm our past position of belief in the Deity and the salvation by faith in Him, and that we will continue to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ as God gives us to understand it, and that we repudiate any attitude to the contrary, whether preached by Prof. Foster or any other."

Later the matter came before the Conference in a different form, and by a large majority the name of the professor was dropped from the roll. It is explained that this does not separate him from the Baptist Church nor deprive him of his ministerial office. This could be done by the congregation only to which he belongs, and it probably will not be done. Here, then, is the case of a man who has been approved and commended as a preacher of the gospel by the regular authority in a great denomination, who renounces almost every vital doctrine of the gospel, who yet continues in his office as an instructor of the people in religious truth. He is declared to be a qualified and reliable preacher, and Baptists everywhere are instructed to receive and hear him as such. Moreover, his soundness in the faith is vouched for. If that is not the meaning of his ordination, then ordination is a meaningless pretense.

It is doubtful whether there is any provision for depriving this man of his authority to preach. The proceedings against him do not indicate that he is pledged to teach a single article of the Christian faith. He has been immersed and believes in immersion; beyond this there appears to be no specific requirement as to what he shall believe or teach or do other than that which every one who is not a pagan nor an infidel accepts, namely, the authority of the

Bible. The vagaries of men who say they accept the authority of the Bible are countless.

THE PAN-PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL.

I have just returned from the "Ninth Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System," which was held in New York City June 15-25. In other words I have been to what is generally known as the Pan-Presbyterian Council. At the suggestion of the editor I will write down some of the things that I saw and heard.

For the uninitiated it may be well to explain a little more clearly what this Council is. There are some eighty-four distinct varieties of Presbyterians in the world. About thirty-five years ago some one conceived the idea that it would be a great thing if all these churches could be bound together by some sort of tie, no matter how loose. Accordingly a Council of all the Presbyterians of the world was called to meet in Edinburgh in 1877. It was a great success. Forty-nine branches of the Presbyterian Church from twenty-five countries were represented. There were three hundred and thirty-three delegates. Subsequent Councils have met every three or four years as follows: Philadelphia, 1880; Belfast, 1884; London, 1888; Toronto, 1892; Glasgow, 1896; Washington, 1899; Liverpool, 1904, and New York, 1909. The next one will be held in Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1912 or 1913.

The Council in New York did not have quite as many delegates as usual. There were about 200 in all, but they were from nearly every country. It was an inconvenient time of the year. I remember meeting thirteen members of the Southern Presbyterian Church there and I believe they were all delegates. They were as follows: Rev. Samuel M. Smith, Rev. A. B. Curry, Rev. S. H. Chester, Rev. James O. Reavis, Rev. A. M. Fraser, Rev. James R. Graham, Rev. D. R. Laird, Rev. L. C. Vass, Rev. W. B. Y. Wilkie, Rev. W. F. Vanderlip, Rev. James H. Taylor, Rev. C. R. Hyde and Elder C. W. Dorsey, of Baltimore. The writer made the fourteenth member of the delegation. Mrs. E. W. McCorkle, Mrs. Calvin Stewart and Mrs. Champ Clark were in attendance upon the meeting for women.

The Council held all its meetings in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church. I suppose all the members of that church and of all the other Presbyterian churches of New York have fled from the city for the summer. They were certainly not in evidence. However, they left representatives who took good care of us and made every provision for our comfort. A large number of delegates were entertained at Dr. W. W. White's Bible and Training School at the corner of Lexington Avenue and 49th Street. The building was originally erected for a family hotel and has every convenience. I enjoyed my stay there so well that if I ever go back to New York I shall make that my headquarters. It is a good Christian home in the midst of a large and wicked city. Dr. White is to be at Montreat this summer and Montreat literature was quite in evidence in the school. It made some of us feel at home.

The Council held three sessions a day, morning, afternoon, and night. Each session was opened with devotional exercises. These exercises were always